

their homes or buying new homes because of low interest rates. But so far, we're not adding jobs to the economy. That's the critical thing.

I think it means we need to take a real close look at the credit crunch for small business. I think it means we need to redouble our efforts on health care cost restraints because that's one of the things that's preventing small business from hiring more people. But if you look at the downsizing going on in a lot of these big companies, we still need a program which will help us to generate jobs and higher income jobs. And that's the focus that I had for several months now.

I'm happy that the productivity rates picked up, and I'm glad that people are able to finance their homes at lower interest rates. But I'm still not convinced that this country is yet set on the right course in terms of generating the jobs. And that's the key thing: jobs.

Q. What if the markets, which seem encouraged by your commitment to deficit reduction, go down if you don't live up to your promise of 145,000 jobs?

The President. I think they want us to have a steady, disciplined, downward path on the deficit. But I also would point out that sometimes when the markets have been up, the job market has been down. The market that counts is the market that affects ordinary Americans. Do they have jobs? Are their incomes going up? And that's why I think we have to increase investment for jobs and decrease the debt. And we're going to do our best to do both. On February 17th I'm going to——

NOTE: The exchange began at 12:30 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement on Secretary of State Warren M. Christopher's Trip to the Middle East

February 4, 1993

In accord with my pledge to maintain continuity in the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations, I have decided to dispatch Secretary of State Christopher to the Middle East. His purpose will be to convey to all the parties my commitment to advance the peace negotiations. He will elicit their views on how best to promote progress, and he will discuss bilateral issues and regional problems, including Iraq.

This will be Secretary Christopher's first mission abroad. It is an indication of the priority my administration attaches to peacemaking in the Middle East. It also presents an opportunity for the parties to focus their energies on the formidable challenge of achieving peace in a strife-torn region.

With violence engulfing so much of the world, it is striking that in the Middle East a process of direct negotiations has begun. Israel, all its Arab neighbors, and the Palestinians have been engaged in a common endeavor to achieve a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace based on U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

The United States, together with our Russian cosponsor, played a critical role in launching these negotiations. It is my intention to see that we continue that role.

We cannot impose a solution on the Middle East. Only the leaders of the region can make peace. Theirs is an awesome responsibility. Those who oppose the process, who seek to subvert it through violence and intimidation, will find no tolerance here for their methods. But those who are willing to make peace will find in me and my administration a full partner. This is an historic moment. It can slip away all too easily. But if we seize the opportunity, we can begin now

to construct a peaceful Middle East for future generations.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel of Germany

February 4, 1993

National Service Plan

Q. Mr. President, are you disappointed that you've had to scale back your national service plan? You've scaled it back to a pilot program, and is that a big disappointment to you?

The President. No, I haven't. That article was a complete surprise to me this morning.

Q. How so?

The President. I haven't made any decision to scale it back to a pilot program. I had a meeting just yesterday on national service, and I'm working on funding it just as close to what I recommended in the campaign book, "Putting People First," as possible. We always knew that we would phase it in to some extent in the sense that there would be a limited number of young people in the early years could be in the service programs, and that it would build up over a 6-year period. That's what we proposed all last year. But I'm not at all sure that we're going to cut back much from what we recommended.

Q. So you think it will take 6 years to fully fund it and have every American have an opportunity for a college education?

The President. No, no. I think it will take 6 years before the number of young people who choose the service option as opposed to the repayment option hits its maximum number. That's what we calculated last year in the campaign and what we put out in our book. But unless the mechanics are such that we can't implement the service program, which I don't believe is the case, I would expect us to be well beyond what you would call a pilot program as soon as we implement it. I was surprised by the slant of the Post story this morning, because I think we'll do more than that.

Bosnia

Q. —positive to say about the Bosnian peace plan that has been offered?

The President. Yes, I think that anything, any effort that increases the chance of some ultimately peaceful solution is important. But I think the United States has under review now all of its options in that area. And I think at this time the position that the Secretary of State has taken is the one that we have agreed on and the one that I think is proper.

Q. Are you close to an announcement, though?

Q. When will you have something more to say about that, Mr. President?

Q. *Sprechen Sie deutsch*, Mr. President?

Q. Are you practicing your German?

The President. I haven't been conversational in 24 years. Maybe I can brush up on it.

Q. Can you read it?

The President. Yes, I can still read pretty well.

Foreign Minister Kinkel. Do you know our country?

The President. Yes, I've been there several times. I took 3 years in German. And I was in Germany in '69 and '70, and I've been back a few times since. And then I was in Baden-Baden in 1991 at—meeting for several days. The meeting was 3 or 4 days, I would guess.

Foreign Minister Kinkel. —speak German?

The President. A little, yes. I haven't spoken it, literally, in 24 years. But when I was in the country, I heard the people talking, and usually I know a lot of what they're saying.

Foreign Minister Kinkel. You can read a newspaper, perhaps?

The President. I can read quite a bit of the newspaper. I ran—I was in—where was I—in the English gardens in Munich. I ran in a 10K race there a couple of years ago when I was over there on a trade mission. And they wrote it up in the newspaper. And someone sent me the article, and I read the whole article. I could read that. So I can read a little bit. And my daughter goes to German camp every summer.

Foreign Minister Kinkel. Yes, I read it in my paper. This is important because these